



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Gary Yunt  
Notes Team Captain  
Churchill Downs Racetrack  
(303) 981-5629 (mobile)  
[Gary.Yunt@kyderby.com](mailto:Gary.Yunt@kyderby.com)

## **BECKFORD TOPS FIELD OF 10 FOR OPENING-NIGHT WILLIAM WALKER**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Wednesday, April 25, 2018)** – Newtown Anner Stud's **Beckford (GB)** heads a field of 10 3-year-olds entered Wednesday for the fourth running of the \$100,000 William Walker going five furlongs on the turf, the highlight of Opening Night presented by Budweiser.

Saturday's 10-race program that begins at 6 p.m. (all times Eastern) will kick off the 38-day Spring Meet that will be highlighted by the 144<sup>th</sup> runnings of the \$2 million Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) on May 5 and the \$1 million Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) on May 4.

The William Walker will go as the evening's ninth race with a 10:11 post time.

Now trained by **Brendan Walsh**, Beckford will be making his first start since finishing fifth behind **Mendelssohn** in last year's Breeders' Cup Juvenile Turf (Grade I). Prior to that, Beckford had won a Group II race in Ireland and was runner-up in two Group I tests.

**Julien Leparoux** has the mount on Beckford, who will break from post position seven.

Top challengers to Beckford come from both coasts: **Starlight Racing's Salmanazar** and **Abdullah Saeed Almaddah's Masked**.

Trained by **Todd Pletcher**, Salmanazar has won one of two grass starts this year with his victory coming in the Texas Glitter at Gulfstream Park going five furlongs. **Corey Lanerie** has the mount and will break from post position one.

Masked comes to Churchill Downs off two consecutive victories over Santa Anita's hillside turf course going 6 ½ furlongs. Trained by **Bob Baffert**, Masked will be ridden by **Shaun Bridgmohan** and break from post position five.

The field for the William Walker, with riders and weights from the rail out: Salmanazar (Lanerie, 123 pounds), **I'm Corfu** (Arienne Cox, 123), **Vitsal** (Robby Albarado, 118), **Elusive Mischief** (Adam Beschizza, 118), Masked (Bridgmohan, 118), **Angaston** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 118), Beckford (GB) (Leparoux, 123), **Battle Station** (Albin Jimenez, 118), **Drena's Star** (Florent Geroux, 118) and **Pure Shot** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 118).

-END-